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ABSTRACT

More than 2,100 charter schools serving more than 500,000 students operate in 37 states and the District of Columbia. This book contains a report of a study that examined the first 10 years of the charter-school movement. The study addressed the following questions: (1) What students do charter schools serve? (2) Are charter-school teachers more empowered than district teachers? (3) How are charter schools financed? (4) Do these schools improve student achievement? and (5) Do they have an impact on other public schools? Following are some results of the study. Charter schools contribute to the racial and ethnic isolation of students. Charter-school teachers are less experienced and lower paid than teachers in other public schools. Charter schools generally obtain funding for the type of students they educate that is comparable to other public schools. Charter-school students generally score no better on achievement tests than do other comparable public-school students. School districts with growing enrollments feel little competition pressure from charter schools. The report concludes that policymakers should not expand charter-school activities until more convincing evidence of their effectiveness and viability is presented. (WFA)

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